

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 IO-13 ACDA-07 AID-05 IGA-02
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ARAE-00
OMB-01 TRSE-00 EUR-12 /098 W
-----041744Z 054582 /46

P R 041700Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3893
INFO USIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT: WRAP-UP ON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMENTARY

REF: SAN SALVADOR 1463

APRIL 1. THERE HAS BEEN NO RECENT EDITORIAL COMMENTARY REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS PER SE NOR HAS THERE BEEN ANY EDITORIAL REACTION TO THE RICHARDSON CASE (SEE REFTEL). HOWEVER, A STEADY STREAM OF EDITORIAL PAGE ARTICLES AND LETTERS HAS FILLED THIS EDITORIAL GAP, PROBABLY WITH GOES ENCOURAGEMENT. HE WRITERS OF THESE ITEMS RANGE FROM WELL KNOWN, ESTABLISHED COLUMNISTS TO SMALLTIME HACKS. CRITICISM BOXES THE COMPASS WITH MAIN FOCUS ON "USG MEDDLING IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF CERTAIN LATIN AMERICAN NATIONS", "THE CRUEL LINKING OF U.S. AID TO HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS"; AND "U.S. ALIENATION OF FRIENDLY COUNTRIES WHILE WOOING FORMER ENEMIES SUCH AS CUBA". RESPECTED COLUMNIST DARIO COSSIER WROTE AN ARTICLE IN PRENSA GRAFICA WHICH SAID, "THE IRRITAB-

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ILITY OF LATIN AMERICAN PEOPLES AND THEIR JEALOUSY FOR SOVEREIGN RIGHTS IS A SURPRISE WHICH SURELY WAS NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY CARTER'S ADVISORS.

IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE HEMISPHERE WILL REJECT U.S. CONDITIONED MILITARY AID GIVING THE IMPRESSION OF A TREMENDOUS RIFT WHICH MIGHT EVEN

GRIND THE OAS TO A HALT."

"SOME COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE ANNOUNCED THEIR REJECTION OF 'CONDITIONAL AID' WILL SNAP UP ARMS OFFERS FROM EUROPEAN POWERS--EVEN FROM THE U.S.' ARCH-ENEMY, THE SOVIET UNION, WHICH WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS TEMPORARY HEMISPERIC SPLIT. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT PRESIDENT CARTER MIGHT BE FORCED TO TAKE A STEP BACKWARD IN HIS AMBIGUOUS DEMANDS REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS, AND WITH A MORE REALISTIC ATTITUDE DECIDE TO EXTRACT THOSE DEMANDS FROM COUNTRIES LIKE CUBA AND THE SOVIET UNION."

SOME COLUMNS HAVE INCLUDED PERSONAL AND EMOTIONAL JIBES, ESPECIALLY A BIZARRE SERIES OF DAILY "AIRGRAMS TO THE U.S. CONGRES" PUBLISHED IN DIARIO LATINO BY LAWYER RICARDO JIMINEZ CASTILLO, WRITTEN IN A DENSE, ALMOST MANIC STYLE. THESE BRING UP ALLEGED U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST SALVADORAN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS AND QUESTION THE MORALS OF CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT.

THEY DREDGE UP PAST INTERFERENCE BY THE UNITED STATES, AN ALLEGED "TILT" IN U.S. POLICY TOWARD HONDURAS, AND INCLUDE OCCASIONAL DIRECT REFERENCES TO EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICERS. THE EXTENT TO WHICH EITHER THE SUBSTANTIAL CRITICISM OR THE SPLEEN-VENTING REFLECTS OPINION BEYOND PRESS AND GOVERNMENT CIRCLES IS UNMEASURABLE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, PRESS COMMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 04-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SANSA01551
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770116-1055
Format: TEL
From: SAN SALVADOR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770490/aaaadazo.tel
Line Count: 87
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 166f79aa-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 SAN SALVADOR 1463
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2906664
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEDIA REACTION REPORT: WRAP-UP ON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMENTARY
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, SOPN, ES
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/166f79aa-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009